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[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 3:36:01)

But what you're avoiding is dying now. So, yes, great fear, because this is avoidance. Sometimes people get it wrong, they think this presence is avoidance.

Everything else is avoidance. So, don't avoid the death that is actually already here for you now, because that death takes you to life. No past, no future.

Now, this statement applies to everyone. If you leave the now, you suffer. You cut through suffering.

There may be pain in the now. Suffering requires a conceptual entity that breathes stories around the physical whatever is. But that conceptual entity cannot survive in this moment without past and future.

So, the person is something shines through the person suddenly. Intense presence, consciousness, conscious awareness replaces the story in the head. That's all.

And if there is, if doctors tell you you may only have a few months or a few weeks, this is the greatest opportunity. Use that opportunity where it seems there's no more future, because there's no future anyway. Now, life has removed future from you.

Let go of past also. It's easy now that you have no future. They're so intrinsically connected.

Time collapses, and here I am. And now refuse to leave, and you can sense the enormous influx of aliveness when you refuse to leave the now. And so that requires you to be very much like the Zen master whose countenance expresses the uncompromising and fierce aspect of presence.

I'm not leaving the now. And then you go a little bit into future, and the suffering entity is back. And you can see the light immediately gets dimmed.

So, this has been the breakthrough for many people when they were told you may not have any more time, or they were told clearly you only have this short amount of time, basically no time, at least not enough time for the egoic entity to plan a happy ending to its story. Not enough time for that. Because everybody else hopes that that happy ending that the egoic entity is planning, that you will have enough time for that.

The true happy ending is the ending of the story now. So, intense presence, continuous presence, you are motivated enough now for that. And then if you seek some bodily, body treatment that releases emotion, but a lot of it gets burned up in intense presence.

The past gets burned up through intense presence. And that includes long-held emotions in the body, because intense presence is in every cell of the body. It permeates every cell, and it burns up.

I'm using metaphors here, but they point to the truth. It burns up the past. To some extent that happens to all of you in this gathering, because this gathering is an energy field of presence.

So even as you sit here, past in you is being consumed by presence. But to accelerate the process, if you are highly motivated, choose presence continuously as your normal state of being. And, of course, in certain people where it seems there's not much future left, choose presence.

That becomes your motivation. And then there's a very fast burning up of, ultimately, karma. To use an Eastern term, karma dissolves, because karma is the accumulation of unconscious past in you with which you identify as yourself.

That perpetuates itself as long as you identify with it as yourself. It leads to further action, reaction, action, reaction, action. The same old thing is perpetuated, karma.

The dissolving of karma is the arising of presence. And that is the dissolving of past. Conditioning, a mental, emotional conditioning.

So the deeper meaning, when Jesus utters the strange words, you have the power to forgive sins, he's really talking about the power of presence that dissolves the accumulation of unconsciousness in you, identification with which is the deeper meaning of sin. And that's what was his function also, to dissolve, to forgive sins. That's the terminology he used.

Forgive means dissolving through presence. So the whole, it's a fire. I use another metaphor, but that is the flame of the fire of presence.

So a lot of past has dissolved for you already. You don't need to believe it, but that's how it is. But there may be residues that require much more presence as you leave here.

It's continuing in the state of presence. I don't know, I have no idea numerically how much past has been dissolved in you. It varies from person to person, 10%, 20%, 30%, 50%, who knows.

But then the fire burns in you of presence. It's just a metaphor. And as you live in presence, it no longer matters very much on the level of form how much more time you have.

You've already entered death now. And so remember part of that is intense inner body awareness. What a beautiful place or no place the now is.

Always, even in the midst of collapsing forms. If all disease comes from the mind, why did Nisargadatta get cancer and experience a painful death? Why didn't he just choose to die?

I know of one awakened person with glaucoma, another who had a stroke. What is happening here? Nisargadatta was a spiritual teacher.

Why did he not choose to die? Why didn't he just choose to die? Well, he did.

He died long before the body died. He chose to die long before the body died. And then he lost interest, as many of these forms do.

They get drawn so much into the formless presence, beingness. He lost so much interest that he even continued to be a heavy smoker. That's why he got throat cancer.

He smoked, and then he gave profound spiritual talks. And then they asked him, what are you doing? And he said, well, the body has a few habits left.

Let it have the habits. And he was in pain, and they said, the body has pain, it doesn't matter. He had already long before chosen death.

He lived in death, or in the formless life that is the other side of death. One way of seeing it, until now, those beings, so-called enlightened, liberated, I look at them as early prototypes of an experiment in consciousness. Consciousness is flowering through the human form.

And all these early human forms are early flowerings of consciousness. And with that, there are still many discrepancies, because the consciousness flowers through the form of a body created by a million years of egoic delusion, the density of the body, and nevertheless it flowers. So the discrepancies come in.

A person carries the density of an egoic body, and enormous energy floods through it. And sometimes the body even gets killed by the influx of energy. It's not up to that.

Don't be scared, that's not the purpose of the... Some spiritual teachers had continuous aches and pains. Krishnamurti was plagued by intense headaches for many, many years, leading often to unconsciousness, so intense, for years and years.

And he never went to see a doctor about it. He knew it had nothing to do with that. There was an intensity of presence coming through him, through a relative density, although many bodies were far more dense than his.

And so those were all experiments. Consciousness, there's only consciousness. Consciousness somehow moves through whichever form offers least density or opaqueness.

It isn't concerned about who you are. It doesn't have favorite individuals. Consciousness moves wherever it can.

And if it can't express itself fully, it'll move anyway. And if the body can't stand it for long, it'll move anyway. But gradually, the human form becomes a better vehicle for presence to arise, more in tune.

The change is already happening in us. Presence moves through this body without pain, very rare. Only very recently, there have been a few days when there's pain.

For years and years, presence has moved through now without pain. But who knows? There's no claim that things can happen to this body.

Who knows? A perfect physical body is not, in any case, the aim. Eventually, it may become a byproduct.

As long as the body is there, there's a byproduct. But the density changes anyway, so what we perceive as body eventually will be very different. We don't need to be concerned about this.

It's happening already. But yes, with these experimental beings, sometimes the discrepancy is there between their physical form and what comes through the form. It doesn't matter to that form anymore.

They are fine. And they don't even suffer. Even in intense pain, they don't suffer.

Yes, they have intense pain. The intense pain is there, but the suffering entity isn't there. The me.

So what that feels like, and I had... My first pain was in many, many, many years. I can't even remember.

A few weeks ago, I had intense back pain in New York. And it's a strange... I had forgotten what pain is like.

And it's a strange sense of pain being somewhere in your awareness there is pain. There's all this field of awareness, and somewhere in that awareness, there's pain. And it's okay.

Hard to describe. It's almost as if pain were somewhere in your proximity. Oh, it's okay.

There it is, in the field of awareness. Not a suffering entity. And then it goes.

Now, for other, not talking now, not spiritual teachers, but there are many forms of pain, of course. Ultimately, the body is the product of the egoic mind, the human body. So everybody inherits that.

And it's only gradually that will change from... The body will then express, be a product of presence, rather than that. But that only comes when you're no longer identified with form.

Then the form becomes transparent. It's the identification with form that keeps the density of form. The transparency of form comes with a non-identification with form.

So form is never it. The perfection of form is not an aim. The aim, and even that is not the right word, because it would imply future, knowing yourself as the formless, then forms have greater transparency.

But everybody who is born inherits still the egoic bodily form. Sometimes they say in India that when liberation happens, this is a perspective, when liberation happens, it dissolves karma completely. What it doesn't dissolve, they say, is the karma that is in the body that you were born with, because they talk about it as the arrow that has left the bow.

It's been shot already. But even that is an old statement that may no longer apply, as there's an enormous acceleration now of presence coming in. One Zen master, of course, every spiritual master, which is you, chooses death now, the death to form that is there when there's only this, so has already entered death.

Then the death of the physical body, there have been some masters who chose also that. A Zen master announced tomorrow after the evening meditation, the body will go. They thought he had made another joke or some kind of riddle.

And after the evening meditation, he sat up, roared like a lion, and died. It's a nice way to go. There seem to be many dimensions of consciousness.

Examples of a few might be satori, where one knows all things and can heal from a distance. Dimensions of the high self with spirit guides, masters and teachers to guide us. Dimensions of the Akashic records.

Does being in the now help to open up to these dimensions? Now, you may have noticed that I don't talk about these dimensions or spirit guides. If you imagine a sphere, and physical existence is the surface of the sphere of physical existence, this work is concerned with going to the center, the source out of which everything arises.

The life of that sphere is energized by that center, the one source, the one pure formless intelligence, consciousness that you are. Because you are connected, even as this little form dancing on the surface for a few moments. You are an expression of that in form temporarily.

But in between that outer manifestation and the center, there are many realms of form. They're all form. The formless is only at the center.

That center is the center of you. That center is within yourself. But between the outer and the center, there are many other manifestations of forms.

There are form entities that we are not aware of, or only some people are aware of, manifestations of form on different levels. Now, some people, they go from the center, they penetrate one or two levels down, and then they encounter interesting forms there. That may be helpful, but where do they get their information?

Why is it, where do they get, how can they be helpful? Because they are connected to the source. You don't realize that you are equally connected to the source, so you need to get help from certain entities, and they are happy to help.

But they are only also an expression of the source. So this work is not to say this doesn't exist, it's simply to find the source within. If in between that and the outermost you encounter other things that are helpful, it's beautiful.

There's nothing there that you need, ultimately. There may be things that you enjoy, but there's nothing there that you need to know yourself or to be yourself, because that would be, you can get lost in that easily by thinking the answers come from some, or the answers come from some form that is in between here and the source. And they may have great answers and be very helpful, but then, ultimately, they prevent you from finding yourself.

Unless they tell you it's enough, we're done with helping you, now you do it yourself. If you get caught anywhere in between, that can be very tempting. You may develop certain, in India they have the expression, siddhis, certain powers, psychic powers, other powers.

And you can easily, at any point except the center, the ego can still find an involvement with some form and derive an added identity out of that. You may develop certain psychic powers by accessing somewhere in between there, and very easily the ego can claim. And so there have been people regarded as great teachers, but they got trapped somewhere, not the deepest source, but somewhere in between, and exercised psychic powers.

So psychic powers may happen, that psychic power means to, but they're not important, concerned, and if you lose the awareness of source, ego will come in. If the awareness of source is kept, then if occasionally psychic powers, the greatest psychic power is presence. But if you should, maybe you foresee the future, which doesn't exist anyway, but...

So that's the, yes, just as you don't deny or this form reality as physical forms, even there, there are forms, and if they enter your awareness, they are also honored. But just as you don't seek yourself in any of these physical forms, you don't seek yourself either

in any of those forms that come. This has happened in the past.

I read the Theosophical Society before Krishnamurti and during Krishnamurti, when they found him, they were involved very much with spirit guides, and I could see the subtle egos there, they didn't know it, identifying with their relationship with the master. Speak to me if you want to speak to that master, because I have access to the master, and then hierarchies of attainment, all egoic things coming in, can be misleading. If Krishnamurti eventually said, I'll have none of this, this is it, I'm leaving, he needed to go to the source and did.

So it's not to deny any of this, just as you don't deny this, it is form, and it is. But realizing the essence of your being, anything that a spirit guide can tell you comes from the one intelligence, the one consciousness that you are. So go there directly.

And then if you meet a spirit guide, enjoy the meeting. Yes, there too is a holy encounter, just as our meeting is a holy encounter. Holy encounter at retreats, I very much enjoy, and people seem to enjoy it too, encountering each person face to face, and exchanging a hug.

That's a sacred, little sacred, one could almost say ceremony, but it's a meeting. And since I cannot hug everybody in one day, I'd like to hug people over today and tomorrow. And those of you who have better things to do can leave if you don't want the hug or don't want to sit while others are being hugged, or exchanging hugs.

Or you could sit here and simply take it as a meditation. If hugging seems a little silly to you, that's fine too. I'm having none of this new age stuff.

I'll just put the questions away. I'll come back to more questions. I'll stand here.

I saw in a mail order catalog of spiritual products a set of six silent tapes. It may work, if it gets you to listen to the silence. I paid for it, so I might as well listen.

Learning to listen, learning to look. I have a collection of photos. Occasionally I walk around with a camera and take photos of nature.

Looking at each photo is meditative. It was taken in a meditative state of presence. I sometimes walk around for an hour and then suddenly I take a photo.

So there too, just like art, if you see it, it can be a lesson in looking. Here you have a meditative scene, either painted or taken in a meditative state. It points.

It could teach you to look. Maybe one day I'll publish some photos. And it's a contemplation of learning how to look.

Of course, it's everywhere. You could take a square foot here, anywhere. You could take photos.

It's great beauty. But the looking always is through the stillness. And then it doesn't really matter what you're looking at anymore.

And then there's some beauty even if you are looking upon death, if you're looking through stillness. And the same with listening. Krishnamurti would walk around, go for long walks every day.

And he said, often for two or three hours, not a single thought arises during the walks. But this is not something that you need to aim at. It would create problems.

Just one simple look through stillness is enough, one at a time. What perception is like through stillness, as far as it can be expressed in words, and of course it can't really be expressed in words, is in his notebook, Krishnamurti's notebook, many, many descriptions of nature perceived through stillness. And you can see how every perception is fresh and new, totally alive.

And somehow he managed to get that across, even still in the words, that is still there. This looks like a long question, but the question comes at the end. We already touched upon this this morning.

Spiritual awakening is frequently described as a journey to the top of the mountain. We leave our attachments and our world, lives, behind and slowly make our way to the top. At the peak we have transcended all pain.

The interesting thing about this metaphor is that we leave all others behind, our drunken brother, our schizophrenic sister, our tormented animals and friends. Their suffering continues, unrelieved by our personal escape. Perhaps there could be a deficiency, not in the reality, but in the metaphor of moving up the mountain.

But let's just continue. In the process of discovering and living from an awakened and noble heart, on what Buddhists call Bodhicitta, the journey goes down, not up. It's as if the mountain points towards the, I can't read that word, of the earth, instead of reaching into the sky, the center of the earth, instead of reaching into the sky.

Instead of transcending the suffering of all creatures, the movement is towards turbulence and doubt. We jump into it, we slide into it, we tiptoe into it, we meet it fully, we move towards it however we can. We explore the reality and unpredictability of insecurity and pain.

We don't try to push it away. If it takes years, lifetimes, we let it be as it is, at our own pace, without speed or aggression, we move down and down and down. At the bottom, we discover water, the healing water of Bodhicitta.

Right down there in the thick of things, we discover the love that will not die. With us move millions of others, our companions in awakening from pain. What are the various

advantages and pitfalls one might encounter, either moving up the mountain or inverting the mountain into the earth?

If the world is Brahman and Brahman is the world, what's the most effective means to reveal that this is always already so, leaving nothing out? Blessings to you, dear Eckhart. Thank you.

Now, all metaphors are limited, and the metaphor of moving up the mountain gives you the wrong impression that you're moving away from your fellow human beings and leave them behind. The metaphor of moving down gets a little bit closer to the truth, and from this we can see that you prefer this, the metaphor of moving down rather than up. And, of course, this is what we've also been doing here.

The constant theme here is facing death, not moving away from it, because ultimately down is death. That's the, you get to the bottom of it. But the reservation here is the feeling that you might be creating greater distance between you and your fellow human beings through going beyond suffering, as you are up there and they are down here.

So it looks as if you were leaving them behind. But all you're leaving behind is a dimension of consciousness that is suffering. You're not leaving behind your fellow human beings.

You go beyond the dimension of consciousness that is the dimension of suffering. And as you go beyond that, there is not a greater separation, there's the disappearance of the sense of separation from your fellow man and woman. Suffering itself is inseparable from the sense of separation, from yourself and from your fellow man and woman.

One could say the origin of suffering lies in one's perception of separateness, of seeing yourself separate from the one, the totality, and therefore from each other human being. And so a lot of the suffering that arises out of the illusion of separateness is generated when you interact through the illusion of separateness with other human beings, and the interaction itself creates further suffering, because the basis for the interaction is your perception of yourself and the others as separate. So the separation that you want to avoid lies there, and perhaps the main characteristic of suffering is the separation.

The separation between you and your fellow human being ends as you move beyond suffering. So when you're beyond suffering, it means beyond identification with all those mind structures. When you then look upon everything and everyone through the stillness which is love, there is no sense of separation.

So you join for the first time, truly, then. So the metaphor of moving up the mountain and leaving others behind doesn't really work very well, although it's an old one. Behind what you are writing here, there's the very noble and deep sense of oneness that you don't want to lose.

In fact, that is already arising in you, but you don't need to join others in their suffering. You have gone through that. You are still going through that.

We are never walking away from suffering here in this work. There's no walking away from suffering. There's only a walking through, a complete facing, no movement away from.

And suffering ultimately is the fact of death and everything that goes towards death. It's total facing it. And only by walking through suffering can you go beyond suffering.

And those that are still in suffering, the strange thing is, and nobody can understand this fully, you can only sense it or glimpse it, the connection between your consciousness and what you perceive as others or the world. There is an intimate connection between the world and the looker, the one who looks upon the world, the one who perceives the world, the consciousness through which seemingly others' other life forms are being perceived, that creates your world. And these strange insights that have arisen out of modern physics, similar insights that were already there in ancient Buddhism, of the close connection between what you believe is the world out there and the state of consciousness through which the world is being perceived and interpreted.

And there is an intimate connection there. And ultimately there is, and modern physics confirms it, there is no separate world out there, separate from your state of consciousness. So one, when you look upon the world no longer through the illusion of separateness, that is an enormous transformation.

The entire world shifts what you experience as the world. And our view of individuals as separate entities, again, is deficient, of course. Let's look for a moment at it from a different perspective, of humanity as one single organism.

And you are a cell in that organism of humanity. And what is happening to the organism of humanity, or just offering a perspective, one could say from one perspective is a healing, from another perspective you could say the organism is going through an evolutionary change, whatever perspective you prefer. And as that happens, the cells undergo a change, it's the process of healing or transformation.

Now would one cell say, no, I'm not going through that change because there are many others who haven't yet gone through that change, many other cells, I refuse, I am going to wait until all the others are also ready and then we'll all do it together. But of course, it's already happening. It has to happen somewhere, and then it spreads.

And so, in the new state of consciousness, there's no longer the sense of separation. There's love. There's no greater distance.

The distance was there when you were totally trapped in suffering, as it is still in all those humans who themselves are totally trapped in suffering. There's continuous

separation. You cannot really unite in suffering.

You can only separate in suffering. Suffering is not compatible with union. And so, again, if you use the same perspective or metaphor, and of course it is an aspect of the truth of humanity as an organism, one whole, each one is a cell in this one organism, you would also look upon recent events in a different light, which show clearly that part of the organism is still diseased or very unconscious.

So you no longer, this is humanity. The terrorist is humanity. The victim is humanity.

The organism is inflicting pain on itself. The metaphor of disease is fairly adequate, quite good. And healing, us sitting here as cells in the organism, the cells, there's a healing taking place, a very deep healing.

But the healing is more than healing. Healing might mean restoring it to normal function, but there's more here. So the healing is also an evolution in progress.

There is no ultimate reality, only relative reality to individual identity. So ultimately the question of, why should I be free of suffering but not him or not her? I have no right to be free of suffering.

Many people had the feeling after the events of September the 11th, a few days after we had that retreat in New York, and many people had that feeling because the retreat is about the inner state of peace. They had the feeling, I have no right to be at peace in the midst of all that suffering. It is understandable to see it in that way because you give ultimate reality to individualized existence.

But here we have the totality of the organism, and it's almost as if cells within the organism were saying, we have no right to be healed. Look at these other cells. They are still diseased or they've just been killed.

Ultimately, every individual is a temporary expression in form of the one, the one life, the one consciousness. And if you look deep down, the essence of what you feel to be your individuality, the one thing that you wouldn't want to lose, there is something in each one. Not the story.

It sometimes gets mixed up with the story, covered up by the story of me. But within the story there is an essence of I-ness, I am-ness, a deep sense of beingness. That is the core of identity, and that is then misperceived through mental structures, and you identify that with stories.

It gives life, one could almost say. It's the light that shines through the film, and then you get it projected onto a screen, it is the story. But the essence of each film that you see projected on the screen with its figures and moving about in their personal drama, comedy or drama, the essence of each film is the light that shines through the film.

The whole drama that you see, the form reality, are modifications of the light that shines through that film. That's how a projection works onto a screen. If any one figure on that film, if it were possible to continue the metaphor, suddenly became aware that he or she is more than the part that he or she is acting out, or has been acting for years, always the same film basically, if suddenly became aware that there is a script here, and there is a conditioned forms that I am acting out, you could drop beyond the conditioning and realize within, perhaps in the midst of acting out all that, their essence as the core of what they had been covered up by identification with the story and the movement of the story, the core as I am-ness, being-ness, the light itself. And suddenly you know who you are as your essence.

Just like everything else that you interact with, the essence of it is the light also. Every form that you interact with, to continue the metaphor for a moment, every form that you interact with on that film, screen, the essence of that is also the light. And it's possible then that the whole script would change.

If we go further with the metaphor, it won't work anymore. Metaphors are very limited, you can't take them too far. But they help, they are little pointers.

So individuality, individual existence is relatively true, but in absolute terms, no. Each one of us is an expression of the one. Now to address the question with which it ends, and it's a good one.

If the world is Brahman and Brahman is the world, what's the most effective means to reveal that this is always already so, leaving nothing out? What is the most effective way to reveal that? Now you've overlooked that we've already been doing that, and it's easy to overlook because it's too little and simple.

In the mind's attempt to understand, it can overlook the truth that is so simple. What is the means to reveal to us that the world is Brahman, Brahman is the world, and that is always already so? And that, of course, is surrender to what is.

And it stands revealed. Surrender to the is-ness of this moment. And you know that to be the truth.

And that is so simple that the mind can easily overlook it, and five minutes later, it says, How? How? You talked about that?

I don't remember that. That's why I have said it so many times. And nothing else is needed.

That is the core of our gathering. Nothing else is needed in your life, ever, but surrender to what is already the case, to use those words. What is already the case is the suchness of now, whatever form it takes.

You cannot argue with what is. Action can arise, and you can do things also in the moment. But while it is now, it is.

And so, let us accept it completely, and let us surrender. The rest happens by itself. That is the opening.

Everything else happens. Even further questions become unnecessary in that. When there is real surrender, there is no further need to work anything out.

And it is not that you become stupid. You become intelligent, or rather, the intelligence, the one intelligence, can move through you now. So that simple act of uncompromising, yes, to what is now, the form of now, which changes continuously.

Although occasionally it stays around for a few days, like the rain. And then you can see how rarely, in the old state of mind, you live in that way. How deeply habitual the opposite is of not wanting what is, wanting what is not.

And how subtle that movement is, very subtle, sometimes very loud, but other times very subtle. There are many ways of denying the is-ness of this moment. From boredom, to screaming rage, to irritation, to mental complaining, to anger, all different forms, and all the mental judgments that go with it.

So the greatest thing that you can do, of course, is to live in that yes. Sometimes in spiritual traditions they ask, some teachers say, there's nothing you can do, and other teachers say, oh yes, there's something you can do. And this really is, you can look at it from one perspective, and the yes to what is looks as if you could do something.

You can surrender. Are you not doing something? It's spiritual practice of surrender.

You look at it from one perspective. So the teachers are true, so you can do something. The other perspective also works.

The teachers say, yes, nothing you can do. They are right too. That is simply another perspective of looking at surrender.

You're not doing anything. It is. I'm not doing anything.

I'm just open to what is. Just a different way of putting it. So if one teacher says there's nothing you can do, it's true.

And if you truly knew that, you would surrender to what is. There's nothing you can do spiritually to get anywhere. So the difference between the master and the non-master is simply the state of surrender.

It is not greater knowledge, greater skills, greater psychic powers. Psychic powers are not really nothing to do with spiritual mastery. You can have psychic powers and be like

an athlete.

You've trained a particular faculty, like a muscle, and then you can perform certain things. Being a master has nothing to do with knowing more than you know now. It has nothing to do with needing to add another 5, 10 years of meditation to your store of spiritual attainment.

You could add indefinitely. It's a simple fact of not arguing with what is. So some masters are relatively ignorant.

They have no education or almost none, and it doesn't make any difference. And even in that state, wisdom comes out of their mouth with the little education they have. They still speak wisdom.

Who is speaking? The one intelligence to which they are now open. Not the limited mind that knows very little anyway, even in the most knowledgeable person.

That knowledgeable person is just full of mental labels and mistakes the labels for truly knowing. The labels, the more labels you have, the more you are in the illusion that you really know, because you can attach all these labels to phenomena. So the master, and often there are many masters, probably most masters have less education than any one of you, far less.

Know far less on the level of accumulated knowledge, and yet they open their mouth and wisdom comes out. There is a question here, what is wisdom? That's wisdom.

The mouth, you ask a question, and if it's a vital question, the answer comes. Who is speaking? The one intelligence, the one consciousness is using this inadequate little mind that knows almost nothing, and yet wisdom comes out.

And love and compassion flow through. Now obviously, for love and compassion, you don't need to know much. That flows through.

When Jesus talks of the rich man finding it very hard to enter the kingdom of heaven, rich, of course, can also refer to rich and accumulated knowledge, because that doesn't, no matter what you add, it cannot add to the essence of who you are already. And those people who have accumulated knowledge somehow had to relinquish a lot of that. As I did, there was a point in my life when I had reached a considerable accumulation of knowledge and I had built an egoic identity around it, because that was my main thing.

Other people may have physical strength and built an egoic identity around it. They may have good looks and built an egoic identity around it. They may have possessions and built an identity around it.

Or if they have none of these, they have a miserable self-image and built an identity

around it as somebody who has none of these things. And so I had knowledge. Well, at first I didn't have that much, and I realized how little I had, and then I started reading books, and I began to sound more and more knowledgeable.

All these new dropping names and concepts, and just to show how much you know. And so you feel a bit bigger in that, and underneath it you're also still very miserable, because the more you get trapped in form, mental forms, the more the miserable little me suffers, because it's an unreality. But for a while, so more and more knowledge I acquired, and still felt extremely uneasy whenever I was in a room with people, because who knows, I might not say the right thing, and you know.

And then wait for just that one clever remark and get it in there. And then something happened, and all that became meaningless. And then after the shift, a lot of the accumulated knowledge was lost.

For a little while it stayed there, but as there was little interest in it, a lot of it got lost. If now I had to sit for an exam for things that I used to teach, I would fail miserably, completely. It's not really needed, it's not needed anymore.

So why carry all that around? So it's strange, the egoic sense of self often has a particular focal point around which the ego grows. So whether it's knowledge or any of the other things I mentioned, you can watch it, perhaps in yourself.

Many of you have already gone beyond or are in the process of transcending identification with that, and you can now look upon it without feeling, I can't face it, and you can smile if you look upon your ego and how it's behaved in the past. Maybe still occasionally does. And see if it's around a self-image of me as spiritual, a self-image of me as the one who has made it, or wealthy, whether it's based on knowledge, perhaps based on spiritual knowledge, acquired knowledge, so many things, good looks that last for a while, wealth that lasts for a while until the Dow Jones goes down even more.

The interesting form identity, and you don't even need to be concerned how to get rid of it if the focus of your life is now rather than before or later, it can't really operate very much in now. It needs past, future, continuity of me from past to future. Because in the now you're very simple.

In the now you're just the same as a beggar sitting next to you. You're sitting somewhere, here's a breathing body, and there's another breathing body, a beggar, and here's the millionaire, and you're in the state of presence, complete and utter presence. Then there's no longer a barrier.

The barrier between you and the beggar was the self-image, perhaps of you as the spiritual one, or of you as the wealthy one, or of you as the knowledgeable one, or the good-looking one, whatever. And that was the barrier, just as in the joke about the rabbi

and the priest, and the rabbi, the street sweeper, he shouldn't be nobody, he's only a street sweeper. How dare you be nobody?

I am nobody. Nobody is more nobody than me. And in any situation, I pointed it out before, where you remove the superstructure of mental conceptualization from the now, there remains the simplicity of this moment.

You're sitting somewhere, standing somewhere, breathing, walking, moving, looking, alive, present. Here, there's attention, the field of attention that underlies all sense perceptions, that operates. And gone is the superstructure of conceptualization in which the present moment is obscured by a huge and complex mental story in which you are involved.

Because I'm on my way to seeing such and such about this important meeting, and it's going to be problematic. And in the meantime, you miss all this. And when you get there, all you have at your disposal to deal with it is the limited little me with its fears.

If you went with the periphery of your attention, knowing, yes, you're moving from A to B, peripherally you know, yes, I'm going to that meeting, I'm going there, but you're fully here while you go. There remains the simplicity and fullness of this without the complex me stifling the aliveness of this moment, like a heavy bell sitting on top of your head, which is the conceptualized me with its story. And it's trying to get somewhere, hoping at some point it will be free of that through a bit more future.

I just have to deal with this now, just get my divorce out of the way. Maybe then. And then I need to find someone.

Maybe then. And so people walk around with this heavy thing over their head, missing life continuously, but looking for life over there. It's a tragedy and comedy at the same time.

How simple this is, just this moment, always. Impossible for it to be complex. There's not enough room.

Complexity needs past and future. But here there's not enough room. My mother has Alzheimer's badly.

My father is her primary caregiver and is weary to his breaking point. I want so much to help them. How can I?

There's the practical level, and a more important level is your state of consciousness regarding that situation. At some point your father needs to learn, and he may be learning it already, the meaning of surrendered action. There may come a point when it goes beyond what he can do physically, and then action is taken on the practical level.

There's always a solution. Eventually on the practical level a solution will come. But what is more important is for him to use that situation, which is a situation of suffering, of course, great suffering.

And what can you do there except surrender? Perhaps he's already learning surrendered action, as long as he's doing it. And perhaps you are learning also surrender, without demanding that it should be different.

You're facing death. Alzheimer just happens that the psychological entity dies before the physical. Sometimes a brief flash of presence comes with it.

It is almost nature coming to a brief flowering, and then it's obscured again. But it's one way for that flowering to happen for some people, is to lose their mind. A friend of mine whose mother has Alzheimer, I haven't met her, but he told me about her, and he said, this is not the case with every stage of Alzheimer, but what he observed, he said for the first time in her life she's happy.

She has lived in misery her whole life, and perhaps that could not sustain itself anymore. It had to collapse. But it is facing death, the death of the form.

And sooner or later, one way or another, each one of us will face it, enjoy those who have already faced it. Before death comes to you, you have found death. We are finding it here.

So bring surrender, and surrender is especially effective in any situation that appears unacceptable, called by the mind unacceptable. Bring acceptance into what the mind calls completely unacceptable. Then it's very deep.

There are many little surrenders, even at a red traffic light, very little. The old reactive thing is dropped. There's simply, right, red light, stop, be here now.

Little tiny surrender, but beautiful too. But the big surrender comes when you face death, one form or another. So perhaps your father can read the book, the power of now may help, the tape may help.

If he is open, if he's not yet open, if he cannot listen to that, if surrender is a meaningless pointer to him, perhaps another pointer works. If nothing works, while nothing works, suffering will be his teacher, and that works too. He will still be in suffering, in deep suffering, and for many humans on the planet, that is still their teacher, and that's beautiful too, ultimately, and it works.

Crucifixion, encapsulated in the symbol of crucifixion. Suffering, eventually leading to surrender, but pointing out, if he's ready, that can save time. If nobody points it out to him, it might take longer.

If he's ready, he will suddenly go. And then in the midst of the doing, whatever he needs to do physically, until he can't do it anymore, and then change will happen, whatever he needs to do physically is done in the surrendered state, and it will take him into peace. Because anything that you accept fully, takes you into peace.

The worse it is, the more fully, the deeper the yes needs to be. And the worse it is, the deeper the peace that comes with that deep yes. And that's why occasionally, in a person's life, when it's gotten really bad, the yes became, first the suffering became unbearable, then the yes became so deep, that the no never came back.

But usually it has to get really bad, in the absence of spiritual teaching. The expression, although it is a little bit of a cliche, there's truth to the expression, blessing in disguise. Now, once you know that, nothing bad can really happen to you anymore, because it's immediately turned into good, through the yes.

It's just a question of how deep the yes needs to be, it will reflect the situation. You have one more month to live, then the yes will be either a dreadful no, or a very deep yes. And that month, if it's prediction is true, it may not be true.

Miracles happen in surrender, ultimately it doesn't matter. That month will be, compared to perhaps 50, 60, 70, 80 years of ordinary living, there's a month of flowering, intense aliveness, intense deep peace. If your life is led up to that, it all makes sense.

It's all one's past, which sometimes seems so nonsensical, why did I do that, why did that have to happen to me, and that was a big mistake. Getting involved with that, for years I spent, and then getting involved with that person, that was another big mistake. There's no story that is free of that mental story, and some stories are predominantly one big mistake.

It is not uncommon for a person to base their identity on a storyline whose essential characteristic is that of a mistake. That's a painful identity, a painful sense of self. Illusion, of course, painful illusion.

You never made any mistakes, because you're here now. It got you here, somehow. And if it was all one big mistake, that one big mistake got you here, so it worked.

Would you talk about prayer? I'm wondering about how one can pray and form intentions that don't focus on future, and that honor presence. Sometimes I feel love for my children, the world, other people, and so on, that feels so strong that I want to cry.

Is this emotions, or is it an intensity of presence? I wonder if I have some attachment or thoughts caught up in it. So there are two questions.

Let's see this one first. Sometimes I feel love for my children, the world, other people, that feels so strong that I want to cry. Now, is that emotions, or is it an intensity of

presence?

I don't know. Only you can know. If you don't know, then the question is, how can you know?

If it's emotion, sooner or later, it will turn into its opposite. There's always an opposite. So if you feel great love for a person, and it's just an emotion, there's ego that goes with that.

Maybe for your child, or partner, or friend, and one day the friend doesn't return your phone call, and suddenly comes up an intense wave of anger, or whatever the friend does, or your child doesn't live up to expectations, does something silly regarded by you as silly, or doesn't come as often as he should, or doesn't return your phone calls, is otherwise engaged. And if it's emotion, you will often very quickly experience the opposite also, the fluctuation of love and the opposite of love. Frequently in partnerships, of course, you experience that.

Partners experience the fluctuation of intense emotional love, and the next day they're throwing things at each other, even hatred. That's the opposite polarity. So love towards other people, if it remains no matter what they do, then it arises out of presence.

And that can be very intense too, and yes, there can be tears there also. There are not many thoughts connected with love that arises out of presence. You don't build a story around the love.

It's just that. Often with emotions, there's again a strong element of story building with regards to the other person and your relationship with that person. So you can just wait and see.

And if it's emotion, is that bad? No, it's an emotion. And the best thing about it is that you see it.

You see that it's an emotion, a human emotion. There's nothing bad about it. And the seeing is freeing.

You see it as the movement of an emotion that occasionally turns into its opposite and then back to love and the fluctuation of that. And you see it. The seeing is the arising of presence.

The emotion is still there. You don't need to get rid of it, but see it as it happens. And if you don't see it, that's okay too.

Then your teacher is the suffering that arises out of attachment to it. That works too. Everything works.

The other question, prayer. How to pray and form intentions that don't focus on future

and that honor presence. It's connected with similar questions that often arise about manifesting something, about positive thinking, about affirmations, visualizations, creating your own reality, famous concept.

Now there are many people who attempt to create their own reality not having recognized egoic mind structures. And to some extent that also works. Except that whatever I create won't make them happy.

It will eventually make them unhappy and that's why it works. Anything that's created before you have gone beyond egoic mind structures, the basis for the creation is the neediness of the ego and its desire, its urge to make itself bigger. Then you create your own reality with the aim of enhancing your sense of self through creating whatever you're creating.

And that works also for a while, but it doesn't fulfill its purpose because it is designed to make you find yourself. And that, it won't fulfill that purpose. It can't.

Eventually it'll make you unhappy. First it'll make you happy, then either it'll disappear, it's in the nature of things to disappear again, or the very thing will make you unhappy. It's because it doesn't deliver the goods, what you thought it would deliver, for a deep sense of who you are.

You add something big, you create your own reality, and even that big thing that you create out of thought power, it's possible. It comes about, and then for a while it's great, and then it doesn't work suddenly because the base for it was an illusion. So one could say there are two ways of being unhappy, not getting what you want and getting what you want.

So there's that need to add more, that's the egoic need, believing to find myself I need to add something. So although creating your own reality, there is a truth in it, a deep truth, but often that's misperceived if you haven't gone beyond, and haven't even detected ego in yourself. In a wider sense, of course you create your own reality, in the sense that your inner state and your outer, the world, what you experience as the world, they're intimately connected.

And an inner state of oneness and peace tends to be reflected in outer circumstances. Not totally, because everything out there has a beginning and an end, but certain polarities are still there. Any situation you go into, you encounter the world of form.

The world of form, what you gain here on the level of form, you lose there. If you suddenly become very wealthy, then you lose something somewhere else. You suddenly become famous, somewhere else you lose something.

You lose your privacy, but you've become famous. You can't walk in the streets anymore, so you're trapped alone, but you're famous. You can't relate to people anymore because

they all want something from you, but you're famous.

And so many people who achieve great success, suddenly say, is that what it's like? It wasn't meant to be like that. I'm a prisoner now, can't go out anymore.

That's why quite a few famous people have read The Power of Now. If they were totally happy with being famous, they would never have read it. What for?

If you've made it. So what you experience, although the outer reflects the inner, and a state of deep inner connectedness, having gone beyond mind identification, tends to be reflected in the outer, but the outer will still have the limitations of forms. Whatever forms come to you on the outer will to some extent express the limitations of form, and there's nothing wrong with that.

But your world does change, the way in which you experience the world, because it is a reflection of the outer. Now the question is, having gone beyond egoic goals, realizing, having gone beyond the neediness of the egoic mind, and egoic sense of self, what about then? Could we not then use prayer or other means in order to create?

Or do we just sit there, I'm amplifying the question, I'm sure it's all in that question, or do we just sit there and wait for the universe to operate, and bring to us what we need, or until we are suddenly moved to doing something, the impulse comes? And both are true. The impulse to do will come from within, from a deeper level, consciousness, and at times all you need to do is be there in that state, and things come to you.

Whatever you will be teaching in one way or another, and the universe will be assisting you because the universe is moving towards consciousness, and you are then totally aligned with that. And how could it not assist you, even on the level of form? But it doesn't mean that you cannot do anymore.

You can create, yes. Not out of any need, however. We create because you see what you create is aligned with the universal purpose.

Not to make you happy. You would never create anything because you think it's going to make you happy. You realize nothing will make you happy.

You're happy already. Or rather, you've gone beyond happiness and unhappiness to the deeper place. So you don't need it to make you happy or to give you an identity, that's really the main, to enhance your identity, that's where the illusion lies.

But you don't need that anymore because you know who you are. You've gone beyond the story. You create, you can create out of play, the play with form.

Why not play a little and create something that you might enjoy on the level of form? But it is likely that it will be part of a greater purpose, not separate from the greater purpose.

Many of you may want to have a center, a healing center.

And that would, of course, be aligned with the greater purpose. And there to assist that, and even you can focus on that for a while, but make sure that it's not egoic. Make sure you are not unhappy and you want the healing center to lose your unhappiness, which means you're missing the basis, which is the now.

That needs to be right first, get that right first, this, this. Once you're in the now, you can create. But you're not creating to lose your dissatisfaction with what is.

You create more karma. You're no longer dissatisfied with what is. Then creation can happen through you.

And often you will find the impulse comes. Often you don't need to do anything. Things come.

You can still do. Affirm what it is that you know may be part of your purpose on life in this lifetime. And then you visualize your healing center.

That's a form of prayer. Not, and this is just one example, never saying that you are going to have it. Never saying, please let me have it.

That doesn't work very well. Always sensing and feeling that it's already there. It's already here.

Only that works powerfully. It's already here. It just hasn't appeared in physical manifestation yet.

And so you could use affirmations for a while, and even pictorial images for a while. Focus intensely and know it is here. And then put it aside.

Don't carry on for too long. Carry on for a while. The space, forget about it then.

If you carry on and on and it's not coming, it doesn't work like that. You put it out and forget about it. Otherwise, you would be looking, pulling out a plant and seeing if the roots are growing.

So if it's in alignment, it is not self-serving. It is not designed to enhance your identity. You don't need that.

Then it's not a karmic creation. It is aligned. And then that's fine.

Why not? It works beautifully. And many things will come.

It may not be exactly as you imagined it. It may be far greater. It may be different.

Again, finding the middle way between not being specific enough and being too specific.

If you're not specific enough, you might get little surprises. If you're too specific, you limit it.

It's a game. It's to be enjoyed. And then comes prayer for healing.

Perhaps somebody close to you is ill. Now, what do you do? Is there any point in asking for healing?

Requesting? Well, not asking, please heal this person. That doesn't work very well.

Certain affirmations that affirm the wholeness of that person. They are little signposts. Affirmations, no affirmation that implies that there is something wrong, that needs to be remedied.

That doesn't work very well. But affirmations, if you use them, that simply affirm the wholeness of that person whose outer form may look in need of healing. The perfection that is already inherent beyond the form in that person.

And at the same time, you sense that within yourself. That nothing needs to be added to the perfection that already is. And if you sense it strongly, and combine it with a healing statement through words, after which there is silence, it can work powerfully.

Important to remember, nothing that implies that something needs to be fixed or changed. But getting to the deeper place where wholeness already is, beyond the form. And if you come from that place within yourself, after you've uttered the statement with reference to someone, to a person, forget about the person too.

Even the image of that person is dropped. What remains is wholeness, peace, deep aliveness, stillness. The form of the person is also let go.

And then healing prayers can be very powerful. Nothing is needed, needs to be added to what is. That's where the power lies.

Nothing is deficient, there's only the appearance of that in form. You can also hold an entire situation in that way, realizing that the goodness that is underneath the appearance of badness, the deeper goodness that is beyond form, the entire situation with all the terrorists and all that, you can contemplate for a moment that situation and see it. And then, so to speak, you drop it into that, I'm using a metaphor, that pool of stillness, not trying to change anything.

And what remains is the stillness. And if the stillness could speak, it would say, all is well already, there's only the good that has no opposite. Although in the world of appearances, there's good and bad.

Time now for a few more sacred hugs. If you're not planning to hug, you can stay here or go, whatever your preference is. Treat it as a meditation, even as you just sit there, or go

about your business out there.

At some point during the night, the last person must have surrendered. And so, Groundhog Day is over. Although it wouldn't be quite right to say, we did it.

Our last session. No need to project yourself mentally somewhere else. This afternoon, you'll be sitting or standing somewhere else, different scenery.

A shift in perception would be to perceive, rather than yourself moving through the world, the phenomenal world changing around you. And a similar shift in perspective, would be not to look upon the world as coming at you, but as coming from within. You are the projector.

And you don't really go anywhere. It just looks like it. And then the strange thing sometimes happens, the projector, the old pattern can't make, doesn't like its own projection.

I don't like this film that I'm just making right now. Somewhere in the book it says, accept each moment, which of course means this moment, as if you had chosen it. That's the state of surrender.

That's enough. If you only remember that, what else do you need? Then nothing needs to be added.

Life just unfolds beautifully. Accept this moment, each moment, really means this moment, because there are not many moments really, only always this one. But I've said each moment, to make it a little bit more accessible at first.

But the moment, as if you had chosen it. You don't need to believe that you chose it, or that you didn't choose it. That's a question of perspective.

Some new age people believe that, yes, you chose, when you go to a new age person with your problems, they will soon ask, why did you choose to manifest that? Why did you choose this? And then you might react and say, I never did.

How dare you even suggest that I chose this? And then you go away and never want to see them again. And then you can spin stories around, what arrogance suggests, makes me wrong.

It's true in a way. But I'm not taking a stand, neither here nor there. Nor do you need to.

Whether or not you actually did choose, or not choose this moment, is a question of perspective. There's not one true perspective. That's why I never say you chose it.

Don't need to believe that. Just accept it as if you had chosen it. That's all that's needed.

And then say, I will become a scientist and experiment, living in this way, for half a day, for one day, for an hour. And be attentive to this moment always. And occasionally you'll forget that you're experimenting.

And sometimes people also get it wrong. They don't realize what accepting this moment means. They sometimes believe they need to accept a story.

For example, well, I failed in three marriages. I might as well accept that I'm a failure on that level. Or I might as well accept that I'm ill.

Where are you in this moment? You are not ill. Ill is still a mental concept.

Not to negate the fact that you may be having pain. There may be pain at this moment. Or any other physical symptom.

Illness is more than this moment. Illness becomes reduced to just what is at this moment. Illness is an idea.

It has a past and a future in the head. But there's only this. So let's say somebody has told you you have an incurable illness, whatever it may be, AIDS, cancer, all those things that are called incurable.

Acceptance of each moment of this moment does not mean, okay, I might as well accept that I have this. That's not this moment. This moment is much less than that.

It's not having an illness or being an illness, deriving your identity from it. I might as well accept that I'm a sick person. No, no, that's not this moment.

Sick person is an image in the mind. And that's, of course, nothing to do with true acceptance. It's believing in a thought completely, a mental image, a concept, completely believing in it.

And then you think you've surrendered. So sometimes it takes a while before people get it, what this moment actually means and how little this moment is. And so you always have to bring the focus of your attention back to this moment, not some stream of mental images and concepts about myself, just this.

So you never need to accept your illness, just this moment. That's all there ever is, so you might as well. Many so-called illnesses would pass very quickly if we didn't develop ideas around it and a me around it.

But the whole culture, of course, does that. It projects it onto you. But to get out of a system of ideas in the head takes alertness.

To be in the now takes alertness. Just a few more questions. Why now?

Why now? Well, it goes on. Why is there a flowering of consciousness now?

People speak of the urgency of a mass shift in consciousness. Why now? Why not 2,000 years ago?

3,000 years ago? Well, there is a reason why now. And this is not yet apparent to everyone, but we looked the past few days at how great an awakener the fact of death is when it comes towards you and death is faced.

And humanity as a species is actually facing death unless change happens. And that has not happened before. It's unless the shift in consciousness happens, the insanity of the egoic mind, amplified as it is increasingly by science and technology, magnified, the effects of the insanity are amplified a thousandfold.

An insane person with a stick can't do that much harm, but the same egoic insanity with a nuclear bomb or chemical weapons can destroy the planet. So it's the same insanity, but it's being amplified. Whether or not the insanity is also increasing is a question of perspective.

One could say that it is. There's even an increase in the insanity plus an amplification of it through the means of science and technology, the effect of that insanity. So it becomes destructive.

100 years is probably the maximum that we have, perhaps less for a shift to happen. It may be less than that, perhaps much less. The planet itself could not endure more than that of the same old thing, the same old madness, the same violence being done to the planet.

And then comes the self-inflicted violence and madness that humans inflict on themselves and each other. Everywhere you see the effects of it. So now, because there's no choice anymore, and it's a good point to reach, whether it's an individual or a species, to reach a point of death unless a shift in consciousness happens is good.

Many individuals have reached that point and only then did the shift happen. They were confronted with the imminence of death. And so as a species, we are confronted with that, and that's why the urgency is there of change.

And not so much the urgency that, because we could easily get trapped, again drawn back into the old mindset, we need to do something, we must save the planet, do something now, quick. You're drawn, you're right, there is an urgency, but you would be, I'm not saying do nothing, but not being drawn into that mindset of fear because then you're turning away from the fact, the possibility of death. See it fully, clearly.

And the urgency is something within the totality knows, one consciousness knows that there's urgency, and that is why there is a great intensification of that new

consciousness coming through, presence coming through with greater and greater intensity. That's the urgency. It's not the urgency of this, we must do something.

And then out of that, sometimes doing happens, but doing is always secondary. It arises out of a state of being. What is the state of consciousness out of which the doing arises?

And then right doing arises out of that new state of consciousness. The old state of consciousness will be in a state of fear and will be creating enemies and opponents, and there's no way out on that level. So the shift in consciousness until not long ago has been a luxury for humanity, a nice few flowers here and there, but not yet in a need, and now there's the absolute need for it to happen.

And maybe the momentum of the old is so powerful that it won't, it will obscure the arising presence and then the human species will come to an end. That's not such a big deal either. Consciousness then will flow through other forms and flower through other forms, millions of forms.

But since we're here, it would be nice if it, consciousness did flower through the human form. And the fact that we're here is a good sign. It is happening.

What is the relationship of astrology to karma, destiny, the pain body to presence? I assume the question means what are two questions, I assume. What is the relationship of astrology to karma and destiny, and what is the relationship of the pain body to presence?

Well, I know the pain body and I know presence. I don't know astrology very much. So whatever I say now doesn't come from any knowledge of astrology, just from an insight into how things are, which must include astrology.

What astrology points to is your interconnectedness with the totality. I know that without knowing much about astrology. So it can point to ways in which you are, could be seen as a microcosm of a larger reality, reflected here, intimately connected.

And seeing that already would take out, if you really see that, it already takes you out of personalizing everything. If you are just the expression in form of other huge energy movements, then what's personal in that? So if you could even see that, clearly that would depersonalize your life.

And from that point of view, from a certain perspective, it seems that things, there's a certain predetermination. Some people are born with a, if the astrologers, I've heard them speak of difficult chart, or they say, oh my God. Or they might say, oh people with this chart usually would be in prison or something like that.

Thank you, how much do I owe you? Now, the arising presence always means one thing, a disidentification from form and the dance of form. Awareness comes out of from being

trapped in the form and completely identified with form and thereby creating an illusory identity.

Awareness somehow moves out of identification with form and then sees the movement of form but no longer totally in it with self-identification. That is the arising of presence. And that may be a dimension that goes beyond what astrology can do.

It can only perhaps point to moments when that arises, moments, periods, that could be an opening for that, maybe. So astrology is to do, as far as I can see, with how the forms are interconnected. It still operates, it's even as consciousness moves out of identification with form, the form still has its form movement and its relationship to other forms, but there is a distance now and there's less energy behind the movement of form, less momentum, egoic momentum.

So that, the dimension of presence, which awareness coming out of form may be something that perhaps astrology can only point to as a possible time or place when a doorway may be open, maybe. Perhaps not. Perhaps at other times the opposite may be true when astrology says this is the worst possible time in your bad karma and it could be precisely then, because it is the worst possible time in a very bad chart, it could be precisely then, because of the intense suffering generated, that consciousness removes itself from identification with form.

So how could they, it may be, I don't know the details of this, it may be very hard to predict when and where, when it looks easier, so there could be an opening, or when it looks there couldn't possibly be an opening there. So one could, you could conceive of two human beings being born in the same location within almost at the same time, the same city, more or less the same time, so they would, I presume, have a similar chart, or almost identical, and 30, 40, 50 years later the astrologer looks at that chart, which is one chart, but refers to two people, and the astrologer might see in this chart the influence, strong influence of Saturn, or something, I only have little fragments of knowledge about astrology, and so the astrologer, this is a particularly difficult time, and you're likely to be drawn into some drama, and you, whatever, whatever the astrologer, and this may be, then one of these people, in one of these people presence has already arisen, let us say, and there's been a disidentification from form, the other one is still totally identified with form, so with the same chart, one person, the one in whom the stepping out consciousness has already removed itself from a complete identification, he or she might experience that period as an inner turbulence, perhaps, in the pain body, and might say, wow, there's a turbulence, and sense it, and accept it, and hold it, and sit there, and not even construct a story around it, just be there in that, and then it passes, and the other person who is totally identified with pain body goes out to a bar, drinks too much, and gets involved in a car accident, or kills somebody, so that's the same chart, but degrees non-presence and presence, so what that implies is that with arising presence there's much more freedom from what seems inevitable and predetermined,

and it's still there on the level of form, but does not operate with such force, you are not in it, the form of you, yes, but you beyond form are not in it, and so that applies to karma, all other aspects, because astrology is only one aspect of karma, that applies to all aspects of karma, to some extent this karma as all the preconditioning still operates, but it is almost, one could speak, of karma gradually fading out, not being abolished totally, but the forms of karma becoming less, like an old photo, after a few years the old photo, gradually the forms begin to fade, fade, fade, and so that's the realm of freedom coming in, freedom from that, so it's not that astrology then no longer applies, on the level of form it would still apply, but also wouldn't matter that much anymore, because the level of form doesn't matter that much anymore, you honor it, but it does not have the heaviness anymore, so that is somebody talking about astrology who knows nothing about astrology, and the second part of the question, I believe it's a separate question, but related, the relationship of the pain body to presence, well, pain body, usually for a while, since it is an accumulation of energetic patterns, an aspect of karma, is so powerful, so seemingly powerful, such momentum, that it can easily obscure the arising presence, and for a while it does that, I see it often in people who meditate a lot, and yet are totally still in the grip of their pain body when it comes, they don't see it coming, and when it's there it's too late, it's taken them over, so for a while the pain body is the obstacle to presence, then presence reaches a certain intensity, and then suddenly a shift happens, the pain body is no longer the obstacle to presence, but actually fuels presence, and we talked about that before, how it is like presence transmuting the trapped energy that is at a different vibrational frequency from presence, but presence can transmute anything, no matter what frequency, the pain body can't do that to presence, so presence transmutes the pain body, and so what it looks like, I don't want to speak in abstract terms, whenever the pain body arises in you, you know it's the pain body, or at least in the middle of it you suddenly know it, and then you bring your attention and your acceptance to it, attention and acceptance, they go together, disidentification from this form as me, so there's presence, and then presence intensifies through that process, it's a miracle, how people with such heavy pain bodies can suddenly step out, and although they are not yet free, they still experience the pain periodically, and yet are able to stay present with it, this is similar again to astrology, you still experience the energy movement, and yet you are not really in it anymore, it still happens, but there's no self in it, and that's how the transmutation happens, so the questions are closely related, because just as the astrological things and pain body are probably also related, if I knew more about astrology I could talk about that, but it all boils down to the simple thing of consciousness moving out of identification with form, and that is an event of great significance, it looks as if something personal were happening here to us, our lives becoming lighter, easier, more alive, more peaceful, but what really is, and it also looks sometimes as if you could even choose to step out of identification with form, and when you think you can choose, and that's a useful perspective, what is really happening is consciousness at this moment is moving out of the dream of form, one could say Brahman or God is waking up, that was a nice dream,

but it's time to wake up, it's only a metaphor, and then enjoy the dream of form more, because you're not totally involved in it, you can actually enjoy a dream much more when you become conscious of the dream, in the dream, that it's a dream, that's nice, that's quite an adventure, you could do anything, if you knew it's a dream, oh, why great, I'm going to have a great time, because I can do anything, this is only a metaphor, so, us sitting here, you coming here, you looking at, somewhere it said retreat with Eckhart, and you think, a year ago, and you thought, well, should I go to that or not, maybe I will, maybe I won't, I'll put my name down and see how I feel when the time comes, and then the time comes, and you, oh no, I don't really feel like, and then in the end you did go, it all looks like it's a personal event, and you didn't realize that the whole thing is, consciousness is beginning to move out of being trapped in the dream of form, and there you thought there was me, booking a retreat, and then me going home, do we need to understand our own personal pain body, how it operates and its patterns, or is reflection on it another trap into mind stuff? Will it all be transformed by putting all our consciousness and attention into the now moment?

Is keeping a journal helpful or a hindrance? Now there isn't really that much to understand about the pain body. Its basic way of operating is the same in everyone.

The energy, predominant energy field of pain bodies may differ from person to person, but the way in which it operates can easily and clearly be recognized. The pain body is emotion. You can't, there's not much to understand beyond feeling it and sensing it.

There it is. What the understanding is the story that has attached itself to the pain body. There you could begin to explore because that story may be very complex.

The story that has attached itself to the pain body and is being fueled by pain body, by the emotional energy of pain body, may be very complex. Now you could delve into that for a long time, but that would not take you out of pain body. The essential thing is to cut the link between story and the emotion.

The story may be complex, the emotion is the emotion. You may remember certain things when you bring more presence. The pain body may be associated, an aspect of the pain body may be associated with something that happened in your childhood perhaps.

It may be associated with something that happened a million years ago. So you can't investigate it all. Because it's not only personal, it's from this lifetime, it's genetic too, it's inherited human pain.

And if evolution is true, maybe part of the pain body is that when you lived in the sea, you got eaten a million times. It's the pain of being trapped in form. Even animals are trapped in form, but not as much as humans.

Animals are trapped in their physical form, but they are not trapped in the psychological form. That's the added dimension, the added prison in which humans are trapped. This is why although animals have their limitations, which are the limitations of form, and are not a total expression of freedom, of course, they are governed by their conditioned behavior.

And yet, because they are free of the psychological form of me, it can be a teaching to watch an animal, how a being moves and lives that is free of psychological form of egoic identity, of a psychological me. So compared to humans, one could almost say, on one level an animal is freer almost, more deeply connected still to the source. And so it is always a meditation to watch an animal move and be itself without trying to be anything other than itself.

And that's why people love, perhaps they don't know that, but there are many people who love watching an animal, because it is a teaching so much at one with itself, so free of problems. It can have pain, of course, but also acceptance. When a cat, I've lived with many cats, at the moment I don't have any, well, you don't have cats anyway, but I don't live with cats.

And when a cat is unwell, he or she comes into the house and lies down, doesn't eat much or nothing, no complaining, complete acceptance. And also they don't make a sound, perhaps they've learned that they mustn't make this, not even a complaining sound that comes out of their mouth, because they learned that they are living in the wild for thousands of years, because they would attract predators. So they become very, just very still, and they just wait.

And then they say that regeneration happens, and one morning they are up again, drink the milk, and it's gone, it's immediately, it's gone. Once I had to move, when I left England, I had to leave, I had three cats, I had to leave each cat with a different person. And this old cat that had come to me, called Henry, would spend most of his life, at least in the winter, lying on the heater.

And that was, I felt, oh, will he adjust to a new life? And I felt some compassion and took him to a new home, out of the carrying box, and he came out, looked around, and there was a person sitting there, and after two minutes, he jumped on the lap of that person and started purring. Imagine a human, what, ah, I've lost my home!

Because home is a conceptual thing in the head. Immediately there is the simplicity of this moment. I know there are animals who would react differently, those that have lived very closely with humans, they have taken on certain human traits of behavior.

But the original, this is how the animal immediately is at this moment. If the cat carried the conceptual home in the head, he would be complaining and would be suffering. You've taken, and accuse me, of course, you've taken.

But some cats have a few human traits, when you go away for a long time, and you come back, they don't want to talk to you, see you. And that's a human trait. But the learning, learning that how the cat immediately adopted, said yes to that moment, it was fine to be there.

Any lap is as good as any other lap. And when you watch an animal, watch it in stillness, without interpreting, then it's a meditation. Because much more than humans, the animal is an expression of the one in form.

There's no doer, which is the mental concept in humans. The animal, the doing happens. The bird jumps off the branch and flies.

No prior decision involved, or should I or shouldn't I, it just happens. The doing, there's no separation, there's a flow of doing. And humans can live in that way, not by going back to the animal stage, but by going beyond the conceptual me, going beyond thought, yes, ultimately, going beyond the thought-based entity.

It is strange how often the weather seems to be connected with our retreats, what happens on retreats. I've often observed it, as today, there's a connection between, I'm not going to tell you try and change the weather, but there is a connection, and often it's at the end of the retreat that something happens in the weather. In Costa Rica, on the last day and last night, there was a violent storm.

The roofs, the tiles were torn off the roof of my house, and tents collapsed, at least one sturdy tent collapsed, and howling wind, as if the old were being swept away. And then when I first started having retreats, several times it happened that the weather was always bad at the beginning, in the first few days, and somebody put up the theory, it's not until everybody surrenders that the weather turns around. And very often that is still somehow true.

Even in Hong Kong, when we had a retreat, where usually it's warm, and it wasn't the rainy season, it was raining at first. Everything is, of course, connected. But don't try to transform the weather of the Northwest Pacific into Southern California.

This may be the last question. How to have no mind and still talk? Well, I've been talking all week with no mind.

Not completely so, but of course the mind was involved, otherwise the words would not come out of my mouth, they could not be formulated without some involvement of the mind. No mind primarily means no self-identification with mind. There's still some mind.

There may also be gaps of complete no mind, in which no talking arises, or is needed. But to live in a state of no mind is to live in a state of no self-identification with mind. When there's no self-identification with mind, the compulsive nature of mind stops.

Of needing to think continuously, that stops. So you become free of mind, but mind movements are still there. Now as the compulsive nature of mind stops, because there's no self in it anymore, therefore it doesn't need that compulsion.

The compulsion is only there because it wants to perpetuate itself as a personalized identity, a me, I mustn't let go, because I'll die without that, is the belief. That comes to an end, and so when the compulsive nature stops, increasingly you will become aware of actual gaps in the stream of mind, that's the complete no mind. And then the wonderful thing is to speak out of the state of no mind.

The words arise, it's like the mind becomes like a receiver. Not an old record, but a receiver that receives an intelligence impulse out of the one place where all intelligence resides, presence, stillness, an impulse comes, it is the beginning of form that intelligence takes, and then it reaches the mind, and one could say the brain, and the brain is a filter, through the filter of brain consciousness becomes reduced, just like you put an adapter into a high voltage outlet, and the adapter reduces the electricity to a very low trickle, so the impulse from consciousness in egoic minds is reduced to very, very little, that's why egoic minds are not very intelligent, they may be clever, but not true creative intelligence in the egoic mind.

But even if there's no egoic mind, then there will be more consciousness moving through, but it will still be reduced through the filter of brain, so then consciousness becomes mind, and there will be a great reduction between the vitality of the original intelligent impulse, which has just taken a beginning of form, then it assumes a very clearly defined form through language, thought, and then language, and then of course it's been greatly reduced from the original vitality that came up out of the stillness of presence, and yet, because the egoic mind wasn't in the way, it still carries some of that aliveness and wisdom that is the mark of true creative intelligence, which is the stillness, it still carries that. So when words come out, they're spoken out of presence, yes, there are the two levels then operating simultaneously in you, mind is there, and no mind is also there.

Mind is being informed by no mind, and there's a flow, a creative flow. Of course, every time expression is given, whether through words or through artistic creation, there's a great reduction in energy, because the form is, every form is very limited, and nevertheless, it still carries the vitality of that primary intelligence, and that's the beauty of it. So to understand that, at first, it may be difficult to, the moment you start to speak, there's the tendency to lose yourself completely in those mind forms, and then the deeper dimension of stillness is lost.

That's why it's very helpful as you interact with humans, as you interact with other humans, the beginning of being able to speak without getting lost in mind, that begins with the ability to listen, because every human interaction is an exchange between

listening and speaking. So you begin by listening in the stillness, by feeling the inner body, for example, while you listen, and the alertness that fills your inner space, and even emanates, so you listen in that state of still alertness, and then you may find sometimes what you say then is unpremeditated, and comes directly out of the state of stillness, and it will be more powerful, more vitally alive than anything that comes through mind only, because mind is involved in some way. So that's the analogy of the adapter that reduces that considerably.

The ego reduces it to almost nothing, there's no creativity in egoic minds. Some egoic minds have little cracks in them, and those are the egos who are creative on some level, on some level of their work they create, there's a creative impulse flows in, and other egoic minds are totally so dense that nothing new comes in. To have no mind and still talk.

Yes, strange. Now this experience that you have been having these days is coming to an end, as all experiences do. The essence of our gathering is beyond any experience.

It's there wherever you go. It can't leave you. On the level of experience, this has not been, if it were only experience of forms, well, not all that memorable.

You had a few nice soaks in the hot tub, and then one day was like every other day, it was Groundhog Day, same. And yet there was something here, there is something here that is not memorable, but the essence, and that is you, and that is the now, and you and the now are one, the field of now. And then you go away from here, and just enjoy the continuing dance of phenomenal existence, changes all the time, unless you happen to get stuck on a Groundhog Day, but that only happens through resistance.

And if you find yourself in a few hours time at an airport, what difference does it make? Other forms moving about. Here there's nature, but those forms are also nature, covered up by mind, but nature, and it's the now.

It's miraculous when you find stillness in the most unlikely places, not as external silence, but the same stillness that is the backdrop to all natural phenomena, the beauty of nature. The same is there when you are certainly at Portland Airport or wherever. Don't get drawn, there's a tendency you could get drawn back into losing yourself in the forms again completely, the outer forms and the mind forms, and then believing that these forms matter absolutely.

And so you've lost, you've not lost it, but you don't know it anymore, the field of now. Only that matters absolutely, knowing yourself as that. Every form matters relatively, not absolutely.

And then you sit on a plane, and then you sit in a car, and then you walk a few steps, and then you arrive home, drink a cup of tea, maybe you rush to make some coffee, it's

okay, or you rush into your bathroom, ah! At last, coffee, bathroom, and then the mind says, I guess I'm not ready for the spiritual life. But the spiritual life has nothing to do with bathroom or not bathroom, or coffee or no coffee.

You can be spiritual in a luxury bathroom, and you could be completely unspiritual living in a monastery where you have to break the ice every morning to get to wash your hands, because you might have a strong image of yourself as so spiritual as you break that ice. I was once in a monastery where that happened. I was visiting for a few days, and the monk who was breaking the ice said, as he was breaking the ice, he said, this is the holy life.

It could be, or it could not be. So the essence of our gathering here is always there with you as yourself, what else could it be? My love is with you as myself, what else could it be?

There's no separation, knowing that you're free. Thank you. A few more sacred hugs to come.

And if you have to rush off, remember the Zen saying, hurry slowly. So this is our silent evening meditation. I don't want to give you any techniques as such, but remember the two approaches.

As you sit here, surrender totally to this moment so completely that you accept this moment so completely that you don't need to add any thought to it. It couldn't add anything to the perfection that's already here. That's how completely you can accept this moment.

And then no further techniques are necessary. One could almost say you're in love with this moment, the now, the only now. And that means you're also in love with God.

You can't be in love with God and not be in love with this moment. Of course, being in love with God is being love because there's no duality, different perspectives. Or you can choose the other, the more active approach.

As we sit here, step into the state of attention, alert attention, out of involvement with thought. Choose the state of attention, sense perceptions. Looking, listening, paying total attention to sense perceptions.

And then sense the field of attention itself. That's the ground in which the sense perception happens. And it's even possible that the state of attention, that pure awareness, fills you so completely within and without that full emptiness that all phenomena are peripheral.

Eyes can be open or eyes can be closed, or you can alternate. Whether or not I'm going to speak during our meditation, I don't know yet. Whether or not words come.

The bell is the call to attention. The familiar sound of rain is not there tonight, but there's the sound of the river, I believe, water. Connect with the feeling of the inner body as you sit here now.

Aliveness. Hands, feet, legs, the entire body is alive. And you sense that aliveness.

You are that aliveness, inhabiting fully the body. And you're in the now. And from there, you can direct attention outward without losing yourself in the sense perception.

The strange thing that then arises, and that's a very new thing for almost everybody, you feel at home in the now. And that's, for most people, a completely new thing. They were always looking for home in a mental projection of future, but not now, to completely inhabit this now as your home.

What else is your home if not this? It's a kind of metaphor, of course, when I say home. It points to that state of oneness with what is.

Not deriving an illusory identity from your opposition to what is. And humans have lived like that for a long time. And what is here is the external forms, this room, the voice, your body resting on a cushion or a chair, the sound of the water, the space in this room, the totality of sense perceptions, and underneath it all, stillness, life stillness.

That's the essence of now. The room, the sounds, are the form of now. So knowing both the essence of now, and it's easy to say yes to the forms of now.

Or say yes to the forms of now, and then it's easy to know the essence of now. Any no to any form of now obscures to you the essence of now, which is the essence of being, of your very self. And that no is the basis for the egoic identity.

Now, if you know the essence of now, there's joy in that. But don't look for it, because at first that joy is very subtle. You may not even sense it at first.

The essence of now seems at first a nothingness, and then there's a subtle emanation of joy. It's very different from happiness, and it can appear precisely at the time when the form of now dissolves in front of your eyes. Death, and you don't run away from it.

Then the essence of now remains. I'm explaining in slightly different words, but I've explained already, different, slightly different perspective. And that's the depth and mystery of death and the eternal life.

Because when Jesus used this strange expression, eternal life, he speaks of the essence of now, the essence of life, not the form of life, the one life, the one consciousness. So we are not turning away from what looks at first like darkness, but it's not death. And so it has been said, find death before death finds you, because it'll find you.

And that's why we're here, to find death before it finds us. We found it already, and it

turns out to be life beyond form. And that's what everybody's running away from all their lives.

They want to deny. So in that state of now awareness, pure awareness, or as I sometimes call it, awareness of awareness, self-awareness, this continuous awareness of that which is beyond form. So you are, the now is the portal into death and life.

From one side, it looks like death from the side, from the perspective of form. You step through it, and you realize it's life. That's the portal of now.

But many are so afraid to step through it, because it doesn't look nice from this side. So one could say it is the negation of one's form identity. It is, the form identity is allowed, but recognized as only form identity.

You live in continuous touch with death when you're present, fully present, which of course is life. And so not long ago, I found myself on a mountaintop in China, and there was an inscription in stone, carved into stone, Chinese characters. And I asked my friend who's Chinese, what does this mean?

And he said, it means Buddha. And then I looked more closely at the characters, and there were two there, not just one character, but two. And I said, why is it two if it means Buddha?

And he said, well, the first one means man or human being. And the one, the character next to it means no. And the two together mean Buddha.

Enormous wisdom in that. And perhaps most people don't see it anymore, even Buddhists, perhaps in popular Buddhism, popular religion is relatively superficial. To see the depth and wisdom in that, it is the negation of form, and that is Buddha.

The recognition of the illusory nature of form, and yet an illusion that is allowed, is embraced. You are now vast enough to embrace also the illusion of form, even enjoy it. In fact, you can only enjoy it when you don't look for yourself in it anymore.

As long as you look for yourself in it, you're trying hard to enjoy it, but it always turns into its opposite. And it's only when you're not looking in the form of me, any other form, to self-seeking in form, you can enjoy the world of form, the world. And it's no longer a serious business.

You honor it, yes. You care for it even. There's care now when you don't need, you neither need the forms, nor are you threatened by the forms that make up the world.

And only when you no longer need the forms and are not threatened by the forms can there be love. The absence of need and threat of forms is love. No matter how hard you try, as long as there's self-seeking in form, you're looking for yourself to identify with

some form, thought form, external forms, or you fear the forms.

And you can try hard to love and say, I must love my neighbor. And they have tried for a long time. Jesus, I'm very certain, never said, you must love your neighbor as yourself.

He pointed to a state of consciousness in which you know your neighbor as yourself. You know the other as yourself. And he said, when you know your neighbor as yourself, that's love.

And when there's love, you know all forms in their essence being one with your essence. I wasn't going to say anything. So continuously, Kim asked me, are you going to say something?

And I said, no. So there's no table. You did put one in?

Oh, she knows me. And just one more reminder, how to go beyond form, being trapped in form. Allow the form of this moment to be as it is.

Enough. The allowing is the opening up of the formless. The yes to now, to the form of now, is the opening up of forms.

That's all. Not complicated. I'll ring the bell again.

Be here as long as feels comfortable sitting here. Should you open your eyes, meditate when I'm gone on the absence of this form. Beautiful.

Much nicer than the form. Always is.